YOUTHPRIDE NEWSLETTER

Because No One Should Grow Up Invisible or Alone

Vol. 2 No. 3 1999

Unity Above Hate
A Milestone for YouthPride

by Wendy Darling

"2 4 6 8 - Don't assume your kids are straight!" was among the many chants shouted out by members of YouthPride at Unity Above Hate, a march and rally conceived, planned and executed by YouthPride youth. The event which took place, Saturday, March 27, began at the Georgia State Capitol with a gathering of between 200 and 300 people, launched into a march through downtown, and ended with a three-hour rally at Woodruff Park.

The Start of the March!

At the rally, speakers, including Rebecca Isaacs of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, brought a sharp focus onto the issues and needs of GLBTQ youth. In between speakers, crowds enjoyed musical performances from a number of youth bands as well as special guest, Atlanta-based singer-songwriter Doria Roberts. The rally also included several tables where both YouthPride and other organizations distributed literature and answered questions. The weather was picture perfect.

YP Members Enjoying Their Day

Secret Crush *Noah Saunders* *Mason Harrison*

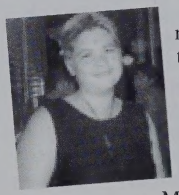
YouthPride has many individuals and organizations to thank for the success of this event, which was covered by three local news stations as well as *Southern Voice*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *Creative Loafing*. One of the main supporters of this event was the Georgia Equality Project, who, through partnership with NGLTF, supplied a major amount of the funding and served to connect youth organizers with resources and ideas. Thanks are also due to the City of Atlanta, GLAAD, Atlanta Pride, and the tireless efforts of YouthPride's many volunteers and youth. We hope to have an equally successful event next year!

Thinking about what to do for the millennium celebration? Consider the Prism '99 Ball on Dec. 31st from 9pm until 1am. It will be at the Fernbank Museum and breakfast will be served up at midnight. There are only 1000 tickets at $175 each. YouthPride will benefit from some of the proceeds. We're looking for *hosts* to sell tickets as well as *Angels* to sponsor the event by purchasing $500 tickets. We've already got a few *Angels* out there! Surely there are more!

Pride '99 is set for June 25-27 this year. The theme is "Prideful Past, Powerful Future." Look for the YP booth. John Badger, a youth intern for the Pride Committee, will be ensuring that youth needs are addressed during the festival.

Welcome Asha!

Youthpride's Newest Addition



Greetings! My name is Asha Leong and this summer I will start work as your Program Manager. I am excited at the prospect of working with such an amazing organization! My hometown, Charlottesville, is also where I've attended college at the University of Virginia. I am looking forward to graduation and moving South, because I've always been a Southern belle at heart!

Most recently, I've been working as a Community Organizer for the AIDS/HIV Services Group of Charlottesville. I have co-developed a social/education program for young gay, bi, trans, questioning men. DESIRE works to create a cohesive community where identities and behaviors are valued and respected regardless of differences.

For the past two summers, I have worked for the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network (GLSEN). I organized their Leadership Training Institute, a conference with over 80 participants. In addition, I have worked intensively on facilitating a graduate-level Multicultural Education class as well as being an officer for UVA's LGBTU.

Perhaps most importantly, I play rugby and have two goldfish! I am looking forward to meeting all of you soon.

We would like to take the opportunity to dedicate this newsletter to the memory of Liz Chandler. Liz was a former member of YouthPride and an active volunteer. Liz will be greatly missed.

Something to Think About and Act On

by An Anonymous YP Member

YouthPride, as an organization, must exist. I – as a young, queer person, need it to exist: so every Wednesday evening I can be surrounded by a community of other young queer people. Within this community, I look for safety, validation, and support. For so many, YP is the only place to find this kind of atmosphere. In a society where the attitude towards queers vacillates between apathy and hatred, we need a place for celebration. In a society where young people have little to no legal rights, we need a community that supports our voices. Unless someone is lucky enough to have a supportive home life or an accepting school/workplace, YP is about the only place to go. Unfortunately, however, YP has not been a safe place for all queer people.

Recently, a situation occurred in which a white man insulted a person of color in a racist way. While there was a noticeable reaction by everyone, no one said anything to the white man (including myself). This left the person of color completely unsupported in a room dominated by white faces. Not only did it send the message to the white man that his behavior was acceptable, it also sent the message that queer people of color are not going to be supported by their white queer neighbors. This is racism. Further examples of racism exist, as well as instances of classism. While the white, middle class members of YP can quickly forget these instances, people of color and working class people must face them always. For that reason, many of them have stopped attending YP meetings and functions altogether.

When groups organize around one type of oppression and disregard the other types of oppression, people are forced to prioritize their identities. Am I gay first, a woman second, a young person third? Am I a person of color first, gay second, and upper class third? Am I working class first, a man second, and gay third? Do I sit through the racism/classism/sexism to support the gay community? Where will I find support for being queer if I can't? Such prioritization causes people to leave organizations.

Calling out racism is the responsibility of the white members of YP. If we do not condemn racist behavior, we are supporting it with out silence. And as we all know, silence = death. Personally, I look to the facilitators, especially in a situation like the above. Everyone is responsible for their own racism, but in a large group – someone needs to take the lead in calling it out. The facilitators are there to welcome new members, and keep the dynamics of the group safe. This means for EVERYONE, not just white and/or middle class queer people.

One of the obstacles in calling out racism and classism is recognition. White people are not very good at noticing racism. We're not even good at learning it. But it is very possible. And necessary. In fact, I would say it is essential if YP wants to remain an organization that supports queerness – not an organization that simply further validates white and/or middle class privilege. I suggest holding a training or workshop about racism for all the facilitators and any white members that can come. There are a few groups in Atlanta that can do this if asked. I really want to see YP succeed as a supportive and safe place for GLBT. But as an organization, you gotta work on your shit.

– YouthPride welcomes your thoughts. We need the conversation to continue!

YP Celebrates $15,000 Gift

YP received a $15,000 trust fund gift in January. The trust was established by Atlanta businessman Ron Fontaine before he died of AIDS-related complications in 1993. Higgins said his wife, Margaret Graff, had made a personal gift to YouthPride and was impressed with the organization. We appreciate this generous support.

YP Wish List

Let us know if you can help us out with any of these items!

Frequent Flyer Miles for conferences • Chess set • Mirrored Disco Ball • Cookware (pots and pans) • Bean Bag Chairs • Paint and Art Supplies • Picture/Photo Framing expertise and supplies • Camping/Hiking Equipment

Katie Batza, YP member and former Board member, has been selected to intern this summer in the White House's office of Gay/Lesbian concerns. Katie is completing her freshman year at John Hopkins University. Way to go Katie!

ACTOR'S EXPRESS PRESENTS

A Benefit for YouthPride

As Bees in Honey Drown

FIRST TIME IN ATLANTA!

YouthPride Connects with Actors's Express

By Rife Hughey

Atlanta's Actors' Express and YouthPride came together on March 5, 1999, for a gala benefit performance and preview of the acclaimed Off-Broadway hit play "As Bees in Honey Drown."

Gregg Bosson described it as "a funny and light play. The central character was gay, but the central theme was not about being gay," Bosson said. "The message centered around not being taken advantage of in your quest for fame and fortune; it was appropriate for our YP young adults and youth, too."

Significantly, this event marked YP's first major fundraising event and netted over $6,000, exceeding the goal of $5,000. Prior to the performance, YP sponsored a reception at which Noah Saunders, a YouthPride participant, exhibited some of his recent sculpture.

We thank the following corporate sponsors who helped make it all possible: Bert Tillman of Tillman & Associates; Tony Pruitt of A.G. Edwards; Habif, Arogeti and Wynn; ReMax Executives Real Estate: Bert Teate; Mark Ponder and Tim Porter-O'Grady; and *Southern Voice*.

Additional kudos go to Linda Chancey (the mom of volunteer Michael Nazworth) who catered for the event and to Embry Hills Wine who provided the beer and wine. Flowers were donated by Frank Smith of The Flower Market, and Leanne Walasek of Atlanta Vital Signs donated the signs; Andy Reader of Pilgrimage Presbyterian Church donated the tables.

Special thanks and appreciation to Actors' Express for making it all possible.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? PLEASE CALL (404) 223-6780

Our Mission

YouthPride strives to enhance the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) youth through advocacy, education, outreach, support services, and youth activities.

Our Vision

YouthPride is an organization that:

- Has a dynamic youth community center that actively supports educational, social, recreational, vocational, and overall personal growth of GLBTQ youth.
- Offers programs for and driven by GLBTQ youth through a process that serves to facilitate their personal growth and empowerment.
- Implements policies, programs, and services–through education and advocacy–that support a healthy environment for GLBTQ youth throughout metropolitan Atlanta, particularly in school, medical, and social service settings.
- Relates to GLBTQ youth in the context of their family and other primary support systems to serve their emotional and physical health and safety.
- Encourages responsible citizenship of youth by providing opportunities for them to contribute to society.
- Maintains a talented and involved board of directors that represents the diversity of society.
- Has a sound fiscal management program and foundation based on diversified funding sources, significant capital reserves, long-term budgeting, and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Guiding Principles

YouthPride is guided by these principles:

- Interdependence and collaboration
- Integrity, honesty, and justice
- Innovation and creativity
- Respect
- Quality
- Courage
- Prudence
- Balance in life

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Rusty Moore

Reaching Out in the South

by Jen Hoagland

On January 22, 1999, a group of 13 YP members and facilitators left Atlanta to represent YP at the National Youth Advocacy Coalition's annual Southeastern Regional Conference, "Reaching Out in the South," held in Chapel Hill, NC.

The first day, we were addressed by Mike Nelson, who is the openly-gay Mayor of Carrboro (Chapel Hill's close neighbor), John Harrison, the program director of the North Carolina Lambda Youth Network, and Rea Carey, the executive director of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition. They encouraged us to make our own place in the movement and point it in the direction that youth need it to be.

The conference offered a series of powerful and enlightening workshop sessions dealing with a range of issues including: women's health, fundraising, youth of color, STD prevention, effective interview strategies, building youth and staff relations, transgender issues, "the movement."Other workshops on safer sex, religion and queer youth, and facing different forms of oppression were also offered.

Lela and Molly

Sid, Jen, Amanda, Ben, and Wendy with Rea Cary, Director of NYAC

On Sunday, we were presented with a film, "Surviving Friendly Fire" about homeless queer youth in Los Angeles and another workshop session comprised of topics such as: youth in social change movements, body image and self confidence, and the Millenium March on Washington. In the afternoon, we were ready to close out the exhausting weekend activities with a Speak-Out, where anyone could get up and speak their mind regarding the conference and the future.

Thank you to NYAC and NCLYN for an amazing conference! We brought back many new ideas for programming, outreach, and activism. We would also like to thank YP for supporting us financially to participate in such an important event.

Thanks For Your Support!

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YouthPride is made possible through grants and private donations. We appreciate your continued support!

☐ **Please accept my tax deductible donation:**

- ☆ **$25**
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- ☆ **$100**
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Please make checks payable to YouthPride, Inc. and mail donation with form to:

YOUTHPRIDE, Inc.
P.O. Box 15448
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(404) 223-6780

Be a Hero!

HERO (Health Education Resources and Outreach) is a peer education outreach program to GLBTQ youth on sexual health issues for both males and females, including HIV, STDs, and relationships. Join us at our next meeting! For more information call 404-223-6780.

For a short while there was something missing on the web, but now it's back!!! YP's web site is back up and running. Hit it at www.youthpride.org for the latest information.

CALENDAR

YP Board Meeting	**2nd Monday of the Month**	**7:00PM**	**YP Center**
Ages 18-24 Support Grp	**Tuesdays**	**8:00-9:30PM**	**YP Center**
Ages 13-18 Support Grp	**Wednesdays**	**6:30-8:00PM**	**YP Center**
Ages 18-24 Discussion Grp	**Wednesdays**	**8:00-9:30PM**	**YP Center**
YouthPride Council	**Wednesdays**	**5:30PM**	**YP Center**
Cobb County Support Grp	**Thursdays**	**Call**	
HELPLINE HOURS	**Thursdays and Fridays**	**6:00-10:00PM**	

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